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ABSTRACT

This report is a summary of a doctoral thesis concerning the relationship of Future Farmers of America (FAA) Chapter programs and the characteristics of vocational agricultural students participating in FFA activities. Based on data collected from 109 vocational agriculture departments, findings are summarized according to: (1) the attributes of FFA chapters, (2) the relationship between selected FFA chapters and vocational agriculture departments and the extent to which students participate in FFA, (3) characteristics of vocational agriculture students, and (4) the relationship between selected characteristics of vocational agriculture students and their degree of participation in FFA activities. A major conclusion drawn from the findings is that the extent to which students participate in FFA activities is influenced primarily by the number of years students have been enrolled in vocational agriculture. It also was noted that participation of members in FFA activities is increased as chapters provide an opportunity for a high percentage of the membership to become involved in leadership positions within the chapter. Following the conclusions are several recommendations concerning needed research. (Author/JS)

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A Research Report of a Graduate Study

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July, 1971

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RELATIONSHIP OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND PROGRAM POLICIES TO PARTICIPATION IN FFA

Richard F. Welton and Ralph E. Bender

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FOREWORD

This is a digest of a Ph.D. degree study "Relationship of Student Characteristics and Program Policies to Participation in FFA." Data were obtained from 109 vocational agriculture departments and 2,773 junior and senior students enrolled in the responding departments that were randomly selected from throughout the United States. Analysis of these data provided the basis for making recommendations to adjust the FFA program to be more consistent with developments that have taken place in recent years.

This study was prompted by the fact that membership in the FFA represented only about 80 per cent of the total number of students who were enrolled in vocational agriculture during 1970 which meant that there were approximately 114,000 students not being served through the FFA. This is a particularly disturbing and challenging situation to most people in the profession who believe that the FFA is an integral part of the program of instruction in vocational agriculture and serves as a method of teaching and learning.

Undoubtedly the "gap" between membership in FFA and numbers enrolled in vocational agriculture has been due to the fact that the FFA has not broadened its activities and mode of operation consistent with the developments that have been prompted by the vocational acts of 1963 and 1968. This study provides some evidence to assist the profession in moving in the direction of making changes in the FFA in order to accomplish its purpose as an integral part of the instructional program in vocational agriculture.

We are grateful to the teachers and students who provided data and to the National Board of Directors of the FFA who helped sponsor this study. Neville Hunsicker, National FFA Adviser, and Paul Gray, Executive Secretary, were quite interested in the planning and conducting of all phases of the study. They will be making use of the findings in keeping the FFA as an effective teaching and learning device as it has been throughout the years.

Ralph E. Bender

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RELATIONSHIP OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND PROGRAM POLICIES TO PARTICIPATION IN FFA

Within recent years, the traditional concept of vocational agriculture has been altered. Production agriculture is yielding to the contemporary needs of vocational agriculture students. In addition to production agriculture, departments of vocational agriculture are providing an opportunity for students to study agricultural mechanics, agricultural products, agricultural resources, agricultural sales and services, forestry, and ornamental horticulture. With a broadening of vocational agriculture course offerings, the FFA has become cognizant of the need to re-examine and re-evaluate the nature and effectiveness of the FFA program on local, state, and national levels.

The full impact of the changes which have occurred in vocational agriculture and the FFA was dramatized in a speech delivered by President Nixon at the 1968 National FFA Convention. The President revealed clearly that the FFA has become a tool to strengthen the program of instruction and practical experience for students of vocational agriculture. For many years the FFA emphasized production enterprises which taught vocational agriculture students responsibility and thrift, the values of free enterprise, and vocational skills needed to farm. The present program has evolved to include courses which will prepare young men to fill the expanding manpower demands of the businesses and industries which supply,

process, and market the products of farms and ranches. President Nixon, concluded his remarks by advancing the idea that a close bond exists between all students of vocational agriculture:

> ...It stems from an interest in American agriculture and the bright future of the total agri-industrial complex...This common bond exists whether FFA members live on a farm, ranch, in a small town or in one of the large cities where vocational agriculture and FFA programs are being organized...[1]

There are indications, however, the bond President Nixon refers to is not bridging the membership gap. Enrollment in vocational agriculture is increasing each year; yet the percentage of students in vocational agriculture who become members of the FFA has declined. A review of Table 1,[2] which indicates FFA membership as a percentage of vocational agriculture enrollment for selected years from 1953 to 1970, reveals that approximately 79 per cent of vocational agriculture students joined the FFA in 1970. The fact that as many as 114,000 students in vocational agriculture have not affiliated with the FFA is an indication all students are not identifying with the organization. If the FFA is to continue as a viable youth organization, steps must be taken to narrow this membership gap.

Purpose

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of FFA chapter programs and the characteristics of vocational

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[1]Richard M. Nixon, Forty-Second National FFA Convention Proceedings (Kansas City, Missouri, 1969), p. 1.

[2]Tables appear in numerical order in the Appendix.

agriculture students to the degree to which students participate in FFA activities.

Objectives

Three specific objectives were identified as being essential to the development and conduct of this study:

1. To investigate the relationship between vocational agriculture students' degree of participation in FFA activities and selected static and dynamic attributes of FFA chapters;
2. To investigate the relationship between vocational agriculture students' degree of participation in FFA activities and the personal, family, and social characteristics of vocational agriculture students;
3. To determine desirable changes needed in FFA programs and activities which will attract an increasing number of vocational agriculture students into FFA membership.

Methodology

Following the development of the purpose and objectives of the study, it became evident that data from a national sampling would be more useful than one from a state or regional study. The 112 vocational agriculture departments participating in the investigation were drawn at random from the 1970 edition of the Agriculture Teachers Directory and Handbook[3] and stratified according to the four administrative regions of

[3]Agriculture Teachers Directory and Handbook (Montgomery, Alabama: 3042 Overlook, 1970), pp. 66-153.

the FFA. All junior and senior students in vocational agriculture departments in the United States were identified as the target population of the study.

Two survey instruments were developed to gather data. The first instrument, identified as the Vocational Agriculture Department Questionnaire, was designed to elicit information from vocational agriculture teachers concerning attributes of FFA chapters. The second instrument, Vocational Agriculture Student Questionnaire, was developed to secure information from junior and senior vocational agriculture students relative to their personal, family, and social characteristics and the extent to which they participated in FFA activities.

Vocational Agriculture Department Questionnaires were returned from 109 of the 112 schools receiving the instrument for a response rate of 97 per cent. A total of 2,773 useable Vocational Agriculture Student Questionnaires were returned from 96 per cent of the participating schools.

The data were coded on the questionnaires and then punched on data processing cards through the facilities of The Ohio State University Computer Center. Arrangements were made with the Computer Center to have the data analyzed utilizing the Center's IBM 360 computer.

Major Findings

The findings of this study are summarized in the following terms: 1) attributes of FFA chapters; 2) the relationship between selected FFA chapters and vocational agriculture departments and the extent to which

students participate in FFA; 3) characteristics of vocational agriculture students; and 4) the relationship between selected characteristics of vocational agriculture students and their degree of participation in FFA activities.

Attributes of FFA chapters

A profile of selected attributes for an FFA chapter and vocational agriculture department may be seen in Table 2.

Location of departments.--Forty-seven per cent of the vocational agriculture departments were located in rural areas. Another 30 per cent were found in small towns; thus a total of 77 per cent were located either in a small town or in a rural area. There was a complete absence of departments in the industrial suburbs and inner cities.

Course offerings.--Production agriculture, agricultural mechanics, and two or more other course offerings were included in 45 per cent of the responding schools. Production agriculture was included in 90 per cent of the combinations of course offerings in the sample schools. Production agriculture was not the sole course offering in any school in the North Atlantic and Pacific Regions. Only 12 per cent of the departments in the other two regions reported production agriculture as an only course offering.

Multiple teacher departments.--Twenty-seven per cent of the reporting vocational agriculture departments were staffed by two or more teachers. The number of teachers in multiple departments ranged from two to five.

Chapter charter.--Chapter charters were received by 78 per cent of the FFA chapters ten or more years ago. Within the past ten years, 14 per cent of the chapters received a new charter. The remaining 8 per cent did not know or did not respond.

Types of FFA chapters.--A regular FFA chapter only was reported in 92 per cent of the vocational agriculture departments. The remaining percentage consisted of junior FFA and subsidiary chapters operating individually or in conjunction with the regular chapter.

Number of meetings each month.--The average number of meetings conducted by all the chapters in the sample was 1.3 each month. Twenty-nine per cent of the FFA chapters reported conducting more than one meeting monthly.

Written constitution and by-laws.--Ninety-three per cent of the chapters indicated a written constitution in harmony with state and national constitutions and by-laws. The highest percentage (100 per cent) was reported in the Pacific Region, while the lowest percentage (87 per cent) was found in the Southern Region.

Constitution and by-law revision.--The largest percentage of constitutions and by-laws of local FFA chapters were revised within the past two years, with 34 per cent reporting. Sixty-eight per cent were revised within the past 10 years. Compared to the Central and Pacific Regions, revisions in the constitution during the past five years were lower in the North Atlantic and Southern Regions.

Program of activities revision.--Four per cent of the reporting chapters indicated the local program of activities had not been revised within the past two years. The highest incidence of non-revision was shown in the North Atlantic Region with 13 per cent. The Pacific Region reported a 100 per cent revision within the past two years.

FFA essential part of program.--The FFA was considered to be an essential part of the vocational agriculture program by 96 per cent of the responding schools. Regional differences showed the Central Region reporting 100 per cent, while 75 per cent of the schools in the North Atlantic Region indicated the FFA to be an essential part of the program.

Chapter policy regarding membership.--Membership was considered voluntary in 77 per cent of the chapters. Twenty-one per cent indicated that membership was required. The mean participation score for chapters with voluntary membership was 13.5 compared to a mean participation score of 12.0 in those chapters requiring membership.

Number of requirements for membership.--An average of 4.5 requirements for active membership was reported by local chapters. Requirements for membership included: maintaining minimum grades; paying dues; being enrolled in vocational agriculture; owning an FFA jacket; attending meetings; participating in activities; being approved to active membership; and following chapter code of ethics.

Written program of activities and availability to members.--A total of 95 per cent of the chapters reported their program of activities to be in written form. Forty-five per cent of the chapters indicated

that all their members have a personal copy of a program of activities. A reference copy only was reported by 41 per cent of the chapters.

Number of activities planned.--Fifty-four per cent of the reporting chapters indicated that "about the same" number of activities were planned for 1970-1971 as compared to activities three years ago. "More" activities were planned by 35 per cent of the chapters.

Membership involved in planning.--Thirty-one per cent of the chapters reported that 50 per cent or more of their members were involved in planning chapter activities. Twenty-two per cent of the chapters reported that fewer than one-fifth of the membership was involved in planning annual activities.

Opportunity for participation.--Forty-nine per cent of the chapters indicated that members had "a lot" of opportunity for participation through the program of activities. An additional 44 per cent reported "complete" opportunity and 6 per cent reported "little" opportunity for participation through the program of activities.

Recognition according to degree of participation.--A majority (57 per cent) of the chapters reported members received "a lot" of recognition according to their degree of participation in chapter activities. In the "not at all" category, there were no chapters reporting. Seventy-three per cent of the schools in the Central Region reported that members received "a lot" of recognition compared to 45 per cent in the Southern Region.

Percentage membership holding leadership positions.--Thirty-one per cent of the chapters reported from 20 to 29 per cent of their

membership held leadership positions. The percentage of members holding leadership positions in this category was the highest reported. Of the chapters reporting, 62 per cent showed that 20 to 50 per cent or more of their membership were involved in positions of chapter leadership.

Successful areas of accomplishment.--The three most successful areas of accomplishment in FFA chapters, indicated by vocational agriculture teachers, were: 1) financing the FFA program; 2) developing leadership; and 3) improving relations with other groups and organizations in the school and community. The least successful area was reported to be improving the image of the FFA.

Major problems facing FFA chapters.--Three problems were identified by vocational agriculture teachers as areas of major concern. Forty-three per cent of the teachers indicated that improving the image of the FFA was the number one concern. Active involvement of members was marked by 34 per cent and financing the program was checked by 30 per cent. Compared to the other three regions, the North Atlantic Region recorded the highest percentage (63 per cent) of responses for "improving the image." A complete list of major problems facing the FFA is contained in Table 3.

Major changes needed in FFA.--Vocational agriculture teachers' responses to major changes needed in the FFA to attract more members revealed that 38 per cent checked "contests and awards." Nineteen per cent marked "image of the FFA" and "modifications" as necessary changes.

Relationship between selected attributes of FFA chapters and vocational agriculture departments and the extent to which students participate in FFA

Static attributes.--Attributes which are not readily amenable to change without changing the membership composition of the FFA were classified as static. No statistical relationship between the extent to which students participate in FFA activities and the static attributes of vocational agriculture departments and FFA chapters was shown in the investigation. Static attributes identified were: 1) geographic location of high school offering courses in vocational agriculture; 2) number of teachers in the vocational agriculture department; and 3) when the FFA chapter was chartered.

Dynamic attributes.--Dynamic attributes were classified as those department or chapter characteristics which could be readily changed. Two of the 14 dynamic variables investigated showed a significant relationship to extent of participation in FFA activities. Tables 4 and 5 show the mean participation scores for the two statistically significant dynamic variables. Student involvement in the program of activities and mean participation scores were found to be significant. The mean participation score increased as the level of opportunity for involvement in the program of activities became more extensive. A significant relationship was shown between the percentage of members holding leadership positions and the extent of participation in FFA activities. As the percentage of members holding positions of leadership increased from 5 to 50, the mean participation scores increased correspondingly.

The dynamic variables not significantly related to students' degree of participation were:

1. Number of course offerings in vocational agriculture departments;
2. Number of chapters in vocational agriculture department;
3. Number of chapter meetings held monthly;
4. Chapter operating according to a written constitution harmonious to state and national constitutions;
5. Chapter policy regarding vocational agriculture student membership;
6. Number of requirements for active membership;
7. Program of activities in written form;
8. Availability of program of activities to membership;
9. When program of activities was last revised;
10. Number of activities compared to three years ago;
11. Percentage of membership involved in planning program of activities;
12. Extent members receive recognition according to participation in activities;

Characteristics of vocational agriculture students

A profile of selected characteristics for junior and senior vocational agriculture students is shown in Table 6.

Sex of students enrolled.--Ninety-two per cent of the students enrolled in vocational agriculture were male. The highest percentage of female enrollment was reported in the Pacific Region with 14 per cent. The Central Region showed the lowest female enrollment with 2 per cent.

Ethnic background of students.--Eighty-three per cent of the students enrolled in vocational agriculture were white. The highest percentage of minority student enrollment was in the Southern Region where 18 per cent was reported.

Academic achievement of students.--"Mostly C's" was the grade average 49 per cent of the students reported receiving in all high school classes. Forty per cent reported receiving mostly B's or A's.

Occupational experience activities.--Livestock and crop enterprises were the production enterprises which involved the highest percentage of students. The largest percentage of students reporting a cooperative or off-farm occupational training activity indicated this activity to be in placement in agricultural production. A total of 26 per cent of the students reported no occupational experience activity. The average number of occupational experience activities was 1.13 for all students reporting.

Socio-economic status of students.--The mean socio-economic status score for students in all regions combined was 23.78. The socio-economic status score was based upon educational attainment and the occupations of students' fathers and possessions of the family. The scores ranged from 6 to 38. Thirty-eight was the highest possible score a student could

receive. The socio-economic status score for vocational agriculture students in all regions varied from a high score of 24.74 in the North Atlantic Region to a low of 22.7 in the Southern Region.

Participation in school activities.--The highest percentage of participation in school activities was reported to be varsity sports. Seventeen per cent of the students indicated they did not take part in school activities. The lowest rate of non-participation was in the Central Region.

Participation in community organizations.--Vocational agriculture student participation was the highest in church organizations. Twenty-five per cent reported they were not involved in community organizations. The Southern Region reported the lowest non-participation percentage.

Percentage membership in FFA.--Seventy-nine per cent of the vocational agriculture students responding were members of the FFA. The Central and Southern Regions both reported 85 per cent vocational agriculture student membership in the FFA. The Pacific Region showed 48 per cent membership in the FFA for vocational agriculture students.

Non-members previous affiliation.--Thirty-eight per cent of the vocational agriculture students who were not FFA members in 1970-1971 had been members during ninth and tenth grades. Ninety-two per cent of the vocational agriculture students who were not FFA members in 1970-1971 had been members during ninth and/or tenth grade.

Reasons students did not join or remain in the FFA.--Non-FFA members did not join or remain in the FFA for three primary reasons: 1) too

many other things to do; 2) organization was primarily for students who wanted to farm; and 3) meetings were scheduled when they could not attend.

Changes needed to consider membership.--Non-FFA respondents indicated that many changes were needed in the FFA before they would consider or again consider membership. Leading the list of changes needed were: 1) holding meetings when they could attend; 2) changing the image of the FFA; 3) more interested members; 4) more appropriate activities to suit their interests; and 5) activities held when they could participate. Table 7 contains the entire listing of those changes needed in the FFA before non-members would consider or again consider membership.

Factors influencing decision to join.--The most frequently given reason students indicated for deciding to join the FFA was to take part in activities and special events such as fairs, trips, and tours. A second factor, in order of influence, affecting members' decisions to join was that their friends were members. The opportunity to work with others was also influential upon students' decisions to join.

Persons influential in membership.--Friends, FFA advisers and FFA members exerted the greatest influence on members' decisions to join. The percentage response in these three groups was 39, 38, and 33 per cent respectively. Twenty-four per cent of the respondents reported parents as being influential in their decisions to join.

Improvements needed in organization.--Fifty-three per cent of the FFA members indicated that more appropriate activities to interest all members was the major improvement necessary in the FFA organization.

More interested members was a necessary improvement checked by 43 per cent. Two additional improvements with high percentage responses were the opportunity for members to participate in activities (29 per cent) and more awards and recognition (27 per cent). A comprehensive listing of improvements needed in the FFA is contained in Table 8.

Significant benefit received for membership.--Developing agricultural skills was the response selected by 26 per cent of the respondents as the most significant benefit received directly as a result of membership in the FFA. Eleven per cent indicated that learning about career opportunities in agriculture was the most significant benefit. Becoming a competent public speaker was the response selected by only 1 per cent of the students.

Attendance at meetings.--Attendance at all chapter meetings was reported by 70 per cent of the responding FFA members. Sixteen per cent of the members attended about one-half of the meetings.

Chapter offices held.--Seventy-two per cent of the FFA members indicated they were not involved in officer responsibility. Only 19 per cent reported holding a regular chapter office.

Participation in chapter committees.--Over one-third (39 per cent) of the responding FFA members indicated they did not participate in any type of chapter committee work. Thirty-nine per cent of the respondents reported they were members of a program of activities committee.

Participation in chapter activities.--Nearly one-half (47 per cent) of the responding FFA members participated in chapter judging

contests. Other activities in which members participated were: 1) parliamentary procedure, 30 per cent; 2) chapter safety, 19 per cent; 3) agricultural proficiency awards, 16 per cent; 4) agricultural demonstrations, 14 per cent; and 5) public speaking, 11 per cent. A total of 30 per cent reported they did not participate in chapter activities.

Participation in district activities.--Fifty-six per cent of the respondents indicated they did not take part in district activities. Those members who did participate were involved primarily in judging contests, as 35 per cent checked this response.

Participation in state activities.--Participation by FFA members in state activities was principally in the form of state fairs (19 per cent), judging contests (17 per cent), and attendance at state conventions (14 per cent). Fifty-nine per cent of the respondents reported they did not participate in state activities.

Participation in national activities.--Nine per cent of the FFA members reported participation in activities on the national level. Included were attendance at the national convention (6 per cent) and judging contests (3 per cent).

Extent of participation in FFA activities.--The range in extent of participation score in FFA was from 0 to a high of 62. Each FFA member was scored on the basis of degree of participation in chapter, district, state, and national activities. Participation in various activities was weighted and then combined to represent an extent of participation score in FFA. The mean participation score for members in

activities varied from a high score of 14.8 in the Pacific Region to 10.6 in the Southern Region. The mean score for students in all regions combined was 12.3. A profile of selected characteristics for junior and senior vocational agriculture students who participated in FFA activities during 1969-1970 is summarized in Table 9.

Relationship between selected characteristics of vocational agriculture students and their degree of participation in FFA activities

Central Region.--Extent of participation in school activities and community organizations was statistically related to participation in FFA at the .025 level of significance. This relationship was expressed by a coefficient of correlation of .382. Also related statistically to FFA participation was socio-economic status (.179), number of occupational activities (.208), and years of vocational agriculture (.162). Grades in high school were negatively related (-.283) to FFA participation, indicating an inverse relationship between grades earned in high school and degree of participation in FFA activities.

North Atlantic Region.--The number of occupational experience activities was statistically related to FFA participation at the .025 level of significance with a coefficient of correlation of .452. Other student characteristics statistically related to FFA participation were socio-economic status (.315) and extent of participation in school activities and community organizations (.393). The relationship between grades and FFA participation was negatively correlated (-.264),

indicating an inverse relationship between grades earned in high school and degree of participation in FFA activities.

Pacific Region.--Years of vocational agriculture was statistically related to FFA participation at the .025 level of significance. This relationship was expressed with a coefficient of correlation of .318. Other student characteristics statistically related to FFA participation were extent of participation in school activities and community organizations (.229) and socio-economic status (.182). A statistically negative correlation (-.266) was noted between grades in high school and FFA participation, indicating an inverse relationship between grades earned in high school and degree of participation in FFA activities.

Southern Region.--Each of the seven student characteristics were statistically related to participation in FFA at the .025 level of significance. The highest correlation (.556) was shown between years of vocational agriculture and participation in FFA. This correlation was closely followed by the relationship between sex of the student (.524) and FFA participation.

All regions combined.--The relationship between FFA participation and each of the seven student characteristics was found to be statistically significant at the .025 level of significance. Years of vocational agriculture and socio-economic status showed the highest relationship to FFA participation with coefficients of correlation of .446 and .441 respectively. Table 10 contains the intercorrelations among selected characteristics of vocational agriculture students and participation in FFA.

Vocational agriculture students with a higher socio-economic status tended to participate to a greater extent not only in FFA activities but also in school activities and community organizations than did students with a lower socio-economic status. Students with lower grades in high school classes tended to participate as much or slightly more in FFA, school, and community activities than did students with higher academic grades in high school.

A statistically significant relationship was shown between: 1) socio-economic status and FFA participation; and 2) participation in school activities and community organizations and FFA participation in each of the four regions.

A multiple regression analysis of the data for all regions combined revealed that 33 per cent of the variance in the mean participation score in FFA activities was accounted for by the seven student characteristics. Nearly 20 per cent of the variation was accounted for by the number of years a student was enrolled in vocational agriculture. Extent of participation in school activities and community organizations (7.95 per cent) and the number of occupational experience activities (1.92) accounted for an additional 10 per cent of variation in the mean FFA participation score. A regression analysis for the seven student characteristics may be seen in Table 11.

The characteristic which accounted for the greatest percentage of variance from the mean participation score in FFA activities in each region was: Central and Southern Regions, extent of participation in

school activities and community organizations; North Atlantic Region, number of occupational experience activities; and in the Pacific Region, years of vocational agriculture in high school.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon findings of the study and subsequent interpretation by the writer:

1. The extent to which vocational agriculture students participate in FFA activities is influenced primarily by the number of years students have been enrolled in vocational agriculture. Vocational agriculture students who are active in school activities and community organizations tend also to be actively participating in FFA activities.
2. Vocational agriculture students who are FFA members with a higher socio-economic status participate to a greater extent in FFA activities than vocational agriculture students with lower socio-economic status.
3. In three of the four regions, a slight negative relationship is shown between grades in high school and extent of participation in FFA activities and school and community organizations. Vocational agriculture students with lower grades in high school tend to participate as much or slightly more in FFA activities and school and community organizations than vocational agriculture students with higher academic records in high school.

4. Participation of members in FFA activities is increased as chapters provide an opportunity for a high degree of membership participation in the local program of activities.
5. Participation of members in FFA activities is increased as chapters provide an opportunity for a high percentage of the membership to become involved in leadership positions within the chapter.
6. Vocational agriculture students who are not FFA members, and to some extent FFA members, perceive the FFA as an organization primarily for vocational agriculture students who plan to enter into the business of farming.
7. Improvement of the FFA image is a major problem of the organization recognized by vocational agriculture teachers and vocational agriculture students who are not FFA members.
8. Vocational agriculture teachers identify changes in contests and awards as a major modification needed in the FFA to attract more vocational agriculture students into the organization.
9. Both vocational agriculture students who are not FFA members and students who are FFA members recognize the need for more interested members as an important step in the overall improvement of the FFA organization.
10. FFA members believe the FFA organization would best be improved by providing more appropriate activities which would interest a higher percentage of the membership.

11. Vocational agriculture students who are FFA members indicate that their main motive for becoming members is to participate in FFA activities. Their decisions to become members are influenced principally by friends, FFA advisers, and FFA members.
12. Vocational agriculture students who are not FFA members indicate they did not join or remain in the FFA primarily because of their involvement in other school activities and community organizations and because chapter meetings were scheduled at a time when they could not attend.
13. Vocational agriculture students who are not FFA members indicate they would be more inclined to become members of the organization if more appropriate chapter activities were planned to suit their interests and if chapter meetings were held at a time when they could be present.
14. Nine out of every ten students enrolled in vocational agriculture are male. White student enrollment outnumbers minority group enrollment by a ratio of nearly four students to one.
15. Nearly one-half of the vocational agriculture students receive mostly C's for all high school course work.
16. Vocational agriculture students with occupational experience activities are involved primarily in enterprises dealing with production of agricultural products. Slightly more than one-fourth of all the students indicate they do not have occupational experience activities.

17. FFA is a necessary part of the vocational agriculture program according to nine out of ten vocational agriculture teachers.
18. Nine out of ten vocational agriculture departments include production agriculture in combination with one or more other course offerings or as the only course offering in the department.
19. Comparison of the data from each of the four FFA regions are similar in nearly all variables shown. One of the exceptions to this generalization is the percentage of vocational agriculture students who are FFA members. In the Central and Southern Regions, nearly nine out of every ten vocational agriculture students are also FFA members; however in the Pacific Region, only five out of every ten vocational agriculture students join the FFA.

Recommendations

The recommendations which follow in this section are presented as a means of implementing the findings of this investigation. In preparing the recommendations the writer was constantly aware of the data revealed in previous sections of this study; however judgements of the writer were also influenced by personal experience and knowledge of the study areas. It is recommended:

1. That the FFA launch an intensive nationwide effort to change the image of the FFA from that of a youth organization primarily for farm youth to one with appeal for all students who have a

career objective in agriculture. With a modified image which embraces all vocational agriculture students, the FFA would then be considered acceptable by many of the thousands of vocational agriculture students who have not been associating with the organization. This effort should be pursued through the mass media, youth organizations with pre-secondary school members, and career orientation and exploration programs in pre-secondary schools. The program should be directed to all segments of youth, with special emphasis placed upon reaching those youth with an urban background.

2. That the FFA develop a program which will increase the extent of participation in FFA activities by those vocational agriculture students with a lower socio-economic status. However, if the FFA expects to increase participation of the lower socio-economic members, modifications and new approaches in chapter activities need special consideration. Projects and activity offerings must be of interest to the students, require minimum financial resources, and help the students develop self-confidence and a feeling of achievement.
3. That training programs for vocational agriculture teachers, both in-service and pre-service, should incorporate information on social, cultural, and economic characteristics of urban and rural youth from lower socio-economic families. It is essential that a concern for and commitment to work with these youth be

developed by teachers of vocational agriculture. Teachers need to learn who the lower socio-economic status youth are and the factors which affect their participation in the FFA.

4. That FFA chapters exert more of an effort to encourage first year vocational agriculture students to join the FFA. It is imperative that members maximize their longevity in vocational agriculture if extent of participation in FFA is to be increased. Prospective first year members should be personally contacted by the vocational agriculture teacher and FFA members. These contacts should be made on an individual and group basis. The vocational agriculture teachers should contact the parents of prospective members personally and by letter to explain the nature of vocational agriculture and the FFA program.
5. That vocational agriculture departments establish multiple FFA chapters. The creation of subsidiary chapters will allow for: 1) an opportunity for more extensive participation and involvement by a greater percentage of members; 2) additional leadership positions as officers and in committee activities; and 3) the needs of special interest groups (e.g., agricultural mechanics and horticulture) to be fulfilled. Subsidiary chapters would be organized to supplement the program of the regular or parent chapter. Subsidiary chapters would consist of any one or combination of the following: Junior FFA Chapter

(first year vocational agriculture students), Vocational Agriculture Class Chapter(s), Agribusiness Chapter, Horticulture Chapter, and other special interest chapters.

6. That the FFA on the local, state, and national levels evaluate the nature of activities available for member participation. Existing activities should reflect the diverse needs and interests of all students who belong to the organization. The availability of needed and necessary activities on all levels represents a key to increased member participation and interest. As local chapters consider these activities, resource personnel in the school and community could be called upon to lend assistance during the period of initiation and implementation.
7. That FFA chapters provide each member with an opportunity to participate in local chapter committee responsibility. Each member should be assigned, preferably on a voluntary basis, to either a section of the program of activities or a standing committee of the chapter. Members should have the preference of serving on those committees in which they have an interest or special ability which can be utilized by the committee. Members may serve on a committee in the capacity of chairman, co-chairman, or member. Level of responsibility would be determined by student interest, experience, and ability. It is within the capacity of every chapter to provide committee experience and responsibility for all chapter members.

8. That FFA chapters schedule meetings and activities at a time when the maximum number of members will be available to attend and participate.
9. That local chapters, state associations, and the national organization examine and evaluate any policies which may limit student participation. In those instances where the limitation is not justifiable, students should be allowed to participate.
10. That the National Board of Directors and National FFA Officers recognize the need for continuing research efforts on behalf of the organization by providing a budget for this purpose. This body of officials should specify problems and concerns which they consider appropriate for research.

Recommendations for Further Study

During the conduct of this study, the writer became aware of the need for further research related to this investigation. The following list represents those areas which need additional investigation:

1. To determine the effect of organizational modifications recently enacted by National FFA Convention delagations regarding increased membership and participation in FFA activities.
2. To determine the desirability of a name change for the FFA.
3. To determine the activities which will interest a high percentage of FFA members.

4. To determine the course of action a nationwide public information program should follow to effectively improve the image of the FFA from that of a farm youth organization to one with appeal for all students who have a career objective in agriculture.
5. To determine the relationship between vocational agriculture students' degree of participation in FFA activities to the size of the FFA chapter and the percentage of vocational agriculture students who are FFA members.
6. To determine the relationship between participation in FFA activities to occupational success after graduation.
7. To conduct a long-range study to determine the future role of the FFA in the total vocational agriculture program and to propose suitable programs.
8. To determine the role of the vocational agriculture teacher in planning and supervising FFA activities.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1

FFA MEMBERSHIP AS A PERCENTAGE OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE ENROLLMENT FOR SELECTED YEARS

Year	Vocational Agriculture Enrollment[a]	FFA Membership[b]	Per Cent
1953	432,350	363,369	84
1955	456,964	383,219	84
1957	458,242	379,396	83
1960	463,960	378,081	82
1963	488,624	395,812	81
1965	503,878	402,783	80
1966	510,279	445,387	87
1967	508,675	438,425	86
1968	528,146	443,041	84
1969	536,039	449,457	84
1970	544,428[c]	430,044	79

[a]U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Vocational and Technical Education: Annual Report (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960, 63, 65-69).

[b]Total Active Membership by Years, Alexandria, Virginia: The National FFA Center, 1969, (Mimeographed.)

[c]Projected enrollment for 1970-1971 based upon the average percentage increase in vocational agriculture enrollment for each year from 1965 to 1969. The average increase for each year was .0156 per cent.

TABLE 2

PROFILE OF SELECTED ATTRIBUTES FOR AN FFA CHAPTER AND VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, 1970-1971 (n = 109)

Department or Chapter Attribute	Per Cent of Schools
Departments located in:	
1. Rural area	47
2. Small town (5,000 or less)	30
3. City (5,000 to 50,000)	15
Combination of course offerings:[a]	
1. Production agriculture, agricultural mechanics, and two or more other courses	45
2. Production agriculture, agricultural mechanics and only one other course	15
3. Production agriculture and agricultural mechanics only	13
4. Production agriculture only	12
Staffed by one teacher only	73
Chapter received its charter 10 or more years ago	78
Only one FFA chapter operating in the department	92
Only one regular meeting scheduled each month	71
Chapter constitution and by-laws are in harmony with state and national constitutions	93

TABLE 2--Continued

Department or Chapter Attribute	Per Cent of Schools
Local constitution and by-laws revised within the past two years	34
Program of activities revised within the past two years	96
FFA considered to be an essential part of the vocational agriculture program	95
Membership in the FFA is voluntary	77
Program of activities is in written form	95
All members have a personal copy of the program of activities	45

[a]Other course offerings include: agricultural products, agricultural resources, agricultural supplies and services, forestry, and ornamental horticulture.

TABLE 3

MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING LOCAL CHAPTERS AS INDICATED BY VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Major Problems	Per Cent[a] by Region				Total Per Cent[b]
	Central (N=33)	North Atlantic (N=16)	Pacific (N=16)	Southern (N=44)	
Improving the image of the FFA from that of a farm youth organization to one with appeal for all students who have a career objective in agriculture	39	63	31	45	43
Obtaining active involvement of members	42	31	38	27	34
Financing the FFA program	21	13	25	41	30
Obtaining understanding of the chapter and its objectives by non-members in the school and community	27	25	13	30	27
Planning and conducting better meetings	33	13	44	18	25
Developing leadership	12	13	19	32	22
Planning activities relevant to the needs of individuals	21	19	1	23	20
Improving attendance of members at chapter meetings	24	19	25	14	19

TABLE 3--Continued

Major Problems	Per Cent[a] by Region				Total Per Cent[b]
	Central (N=33)	North Atlantic (N=16)	Pacific (N=16)	Southern (N=44)	
Increasing membership	18	13	19	7	12
Reaching goals and objectives	18	13	6	9	12
Changing program to serve all vocational agriculture students	15	13	13	9	12
Improving relations with other groups and organizations in the school and community	3	6	0	14	8
Obtaining understanding of the chapter and its objectives by members	6	6	6	5	5
Keeping the "FFA" name as it is	3	0	0	7	4
Students feel the FFA emblem is outdated and inappropriate	6	0	0	5	4
Obtaining encouragement and assistance from FFA officials for changing the program	3	0	6	5	4
Others	6	6	25	5	7

[a]Percentages total more than 100 because teachers could name more than one problem area.

[b]Weighted percentage.

TABLE 4

MEAN PARTICIPATION SCORE FOR EXTENT PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION

Extent Program of Activities Provides Opportunity to Participate	Number	Participation Score	
		Mean[a]	SD
Little	6	9.07	2.54
A lot	47	12.56	4.69
Completely	46	14.36	4.72

$F = 4.31$; $p < .016$

[a]Mean participation scores connected by a solid line indicate no significant difference between mean scores.

TABLE 5

MEAN PARTICIPATION SCORE FOR PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP HOLDING CHAPTER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Percentage Membership Holding Chapter Leadership Positions	Number	Participation Score	
		Mean	SD
5% to 9%	7	8.91	1.96
10% to 14%	18	12.16	6.08
15% to 19%	14	11.87	3.56
20% to 29%	30	13.52	4.31
30% to 49%	14	14.06	2.85
50% or more	17	15.56	5.62

$F = 2.683$: $p < .026$

TABLE 6

PROFILE OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS, 1970-1971 (n = 2773)

Student Characteristic	Per Cent of Students
Male	92
White	83
Earned mostly C's in all high school classes	49
Participated in school activities	83
Participated in community organizations	75
Member of FFA	79
Involved in an occupational experience activity	74
Socio-economic status score (average score)	24[a]

[a]Socio-economic status score based upon education and occupation of father and personal possessions of the family. Thirty-eight was the highest score a student could receive.

TABLE 7

CHANGES NEEDED IN FFA BEFORE NON-MEMBERS WOULD CONSIDER OR AGAIN CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP

Changes Needed to Consider Membership	Per Cent[a] by Region				Total Per Cent
	Central (N=101)	North Atlantic (N=76)	Pacific (N=282)	Southern (N=217)	
Meetings held when I can attend	27	37	26	35	30
Change the image of the FFA from that of a farm youth organization to one with appeal for all students who have a career objective in agriculture	33	25	23	24	25
More interested members	33	20	23	23	24
More appropriate activities to suit my interests	38	33	3	39	23
Activities held when I can participate	22	24	14	24	20
Opportunity for more members to participate in activities	16	12	13	16	14
Opportunity for more members to share in leadership roles of the chapter	16	8	7	18	12
More awards and recognition	8	9	6	13	9

TABLE 7--Continued

Changes Needed to Consider Membership	Per Cent[a] by Region				Total Per Cent
	Central (N=101)	North Atlantic (N=76)	Pacific (N=282)	Southern (N=217)	
Change the name	10	13	7	6	8
Get rid of the blue jacket and paraphernalia	11	5	7	5	7
More capable advisers	4	8	6	4	5
Fewer activities	3	5	2	6	4
Other	11	4	18	8	12

[a]Percentages total more than 100 because students were asked to ckeck more than one response.

TABLE 8

IMPROVEMENTS NECESSARY IN THE FFA
INDICATED BY MEMBERS

Improvements Needed	Per Cent[a] by Region				Total Per Cent
	Central (N=594)	North Atlantic (N=198)	Pacific (N=261)	Southern (N=1033)	
More appropriate activities that will interest all members	52	50	56	54	53
More interested members	46	46	39	42	43
Opportunity for more members to participate in activities	24	33	30	30	29
More awards and recognition	23	19	26	31	27
Opportunity for more members to share in leadership roles of the chapter	29	26	27	21	24
Meetings held when more members can attend	23	24	23	23	23
Change the image of the FFA from that of a farm youth organization to one with an appeal for all students who have a career objective in agriculture	25	24	21	20	22
Activities held when more members can participate	20	19	26	19	20

TABLE 8--Continued

Improvements Needed	Per Cent[a] by Region: Central (N=594)	North Atlantic (N=198)	Pacific (N=261)	Southern (N=1033)	Total Per Cent
More capable advisers	8	7	5	8	7
Change the name	4	7	2	5	5
Get rid of the FFA jacket and paraphernalia	2	3	2	3	3
Fewer activities	2	2	1	2	2
Other	4	4	6	3	4

[a]Percentages total more than 100 per cent because students were asked to check three responses.

TABLE 9

PROFILE OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN FFA ACTIVITIES DURING 1969-1970 (n = 1848)

Student Characteristic	Per Cent of Students
Attend all chapter meetings	70
Held a chapter office	28
Involved in chapter committee responsibility	61
Participated in chapter activities	70
Participated in district activities	44
Participated in state activities	41
Participated in national activities	9
Extent of participation in FFA activities (average score)	12[a]

[a]Extent of participation in FFA activities score was based upon member participation in local, district, state, and national activities. A weighted score was assigned to each activity on the various levels of participation. The participation score ranged from 0 to a high or 62.

TABLE 10

INTERCORRELATION AMONG SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS AND PARTICIPATION IN FFA (ALL REGIONS COMBINED n=1544)

Characteristics	(Refer to Numbered Characteristics at Left of Table) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Extent of participation in FFA activities[a]	1.00	0.345[d]	0.394[d]	0.344[d]	0.446[d]	0.166[d]	0.370[d]	0.441[d]
2. Extent of participation in school activities and community organizations		1.00	0.105[d]	0.122[d]	0.149[d]	-0.090[d]	0.185[d]	0.227[d]
3. Sex[b]			1.00	0.753[d]	0.838[d]	0.752[d]	0.483[d]	0.847[d]
4. Year in high school				1.00	0.790[d]	0.546[d]	0.390[d]	0.650[d]
5. Years of vocational agriculture					1.00	0.623[d]	0.489[d]	0.725[d]
6. Grades in high school						1.00	0.320[d]	0.612[d]
7. Number of occupational experience activities							1.00	0.458[d]
8. Socio-economic status[c]								1.00

[a]Components of participation score are shown in Table 9.

[b]Females were coded 1 and males 2 in the analysis.

[c]Components of socio-economic status are shown in Table 6.

[d]Significant at the .025 level of significance.

Table 11

REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS IN ALL REGIONS COMBINED (n=1544)

Order of Entry into Regression Analysis	Name of Characteristic	Computed R	Cumulative Percentage of Variance Accounted for by R
1	Years of vocational agriculture (X_3)	0.446	19.9
2	Participation in school and community organizations (X_7)	0.527	27.86
3	Number of occupational experience activities (X_5)	0.545	27.98
4	Socio-economic status (X_6)	0.554	30.85
5	Grades in high school (X_4)	0.571	32.55
6	Year in high school (X_2)	0.571	32.64
7	Sex (X_1)	0.571[a]	32.65

[a]Standard error of estimate = 8.5

Regression equation: $Y = -.691 + .45X_1 - .77X_2 + 2.43X_3 - 1.57X_4 + 1.39X_5 + .22X_6 + .37X_7$

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